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AN OTTOMAN IN IRAN
EVLIYA ÇELEBI'S JOURNEY THROUGH PERSIAN IRAQ

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1. Political and historical background: Iranian-Ottoman relations

Evliya Çelebi, the Ottoman writer and traveller, visited Iran at a time when political intrigues, military campaigns, and war over the settlement of the Ottoman-Safawid border had been going on for more than a century. Shortly after Shah Ismail seized power over Iran, he had been attacked by the Ottoman Yavuz Sultan Selim, a military action which ended with the devastating defeat at Çaldıran 1514, after which, it is reported, Shah Ismail never smiled. In the last Ottoman attack on Iran during the years of war from 1623 to 1638, Melek Ahmet Paşa, the ambitious governor of Diyarbekir, played a leading role.¹ This is of some importance for the understanding of Evliya Çelebi's personal inclination towards Iran, as the Ottoman statesman and politician was not only his maternal uncle, but also his mentor (cf. Dankoff: 1991).

It should be remembered that the two important states of the Middle East in their simultaneous rise to the zenith of power during the 16th century instrumentalized religion as the dominant factor of nation-building. This development is personalized in the figures of the two head-of-states, the Shah, as the infallible leader of the Shii state and religion, and his counterpart, the Ottoman Sultan-Khalife, representing the supreme authority both religiously and politically for his Sunni subjects.

¹ Cf. Bağdat Köşkü 305, folio 328a, on the Baghdad-campaign of Murad IV.: Qara Muştafâ Paşa ve Diyarbekir Silâhdârı Melek Ahmed Paşa.

It may thus have been political considerations which induced the extremely negative view Sunnites uttered with regard to the Shii *mezheb* and vice versa; and certainly both sides had to endeavour after theological sophistry to justify a series of military attacks on their Muslim neighbour.

Although an Islamic confession in its essence, Ottoman writers depict the Shia of the Twelve Imams rather as a heretical sect, or, as 16th century Ottoman historian Seyfî Çelebî puts it, a *medheb-i nâhaqq* 'false religion' (Matuz 1968: 155). Evliya Çelebi's own words sound similar calling them: "Redheads without a religion, who call themselves Muslims."² Moreover, he has a ready vocabulary of nick names for the Ottomans' favourite foe, such as: "the depraved/corrupted redheads" or "the fickle/apostate redheads."³

In the opinion of the Shiites, on the other hand, Sunnites range on the same level as infidels. Their doctrine is so erroneous that its followers will directly go to hell, without even the chance to attend the Judgement at doomsday. Shiites in Iran rarely ever miss out on an opportunity to swear at the caliph Osman, a custom which Evliya Çelebi found highly irritating. Contemporary European observers like the German physician and scientist Engelbert Kaempfer, who stayed in Persia from 1683 to 1685 a.D., thirty years after Evliya Çelebi's journey through Iran, refers to the remarkable degree of hatred between the Sunni and the Shii (see Hinz 1940: 138-139). Persians despise all Ottoman subjects for religious prejudices, while the Ottoman, on the other hand, would readily kill anyone who confessed his Shii creed (Hinz 1940: 143).

The aversion was mutual and long-lasting; two hundred years later, Hermann Vámbéry, who traveled Iran in 1862 disguised as a Sunni dervish, wrote in his introduction:

"Turks are rarely ever seen in Iran, and the majority of the subjects of these two states (i.e. the Ottomans and the Safawids), which have been neighbours for centuries, have the most bizarre ideas of one another. Sectarian hatred, which is much more

² Cf. Bağdat Köşkü 305, folio 305a: *Müslmânız diyen bi-dîn Qızılbaşları vardır.*

³ *Qızılbaş-ı bed ma'aşlar* in the description of Serâh (Bağdat Köşkü 305, 305b) and pass.; *Qızılbaş-ı kallaş* in Hamadan (Bağdat Köşkü 305, 311a) and pass.

extreme in Iran than in Turkey, has created an abyss within the vast body of the Islamic world."⁴

As Vámbéry (1867: 123) further remarks, in the Iranian mind, the Ottomans or Sunnites range lower in prestige than even the Europeans or *Frenği*. "Like all Sunnites, Ottoman subjects are despised and hated."

2. Contemporary Literature on Iran

2.1 Ottoman books on Safawid Iran

One may suppose that the atmosphere of distrust or open hostility did not inspire many Ottoman subjects to travel in 17th century Persia. Touristic ambitions or *Wanderlust* excluded, there was in all probability also little reason to do so, considering the political situation during the 16th and the first half of the 17th centuries and the religiously motivated mutual antipathies between Sunni Ottoman and Shii Safawid subjects.

Obviously, not many of Evliya Çelebi's Ottoman contemporaries had traveled Iran. Accordingly, there seem to be very few contemporary travelogues on Iran by Ottoman authors. We may also suppose that there were no reports of diplomatic envoys to Iran on which Evliya Çelebi could have based his itineraries or descriptions of places. In Evliya Çelebi's time, Ottoman delegations had hardly ever been sent to Iran. Ottoman-Safawid diplomacy relied on other, more violent means, as the numerous raids during the 16th and early 17th century indicate. Judging from the state of affairs depicted by Babinger (1927), diplomatic activities began only at the beginning of the 18th century.⁵

⁴ "Türken jedoch sind nur äusserst seltene Erscheinungen in Iran, und der Gros dieser seit Jahrhunderten in Nachbarschaft lebenden Nationen haben voneinander die fabelhaftesten Begriffe. Der Sectenhass, der im schiitischen Iran in prägnanteren Farben anzutreffen ist als in der Türkei, hat eine gewaltige Kluft im grossen Körper der islamitischen Welt geschaffen ..." (Introduction); "Osmanli oder Sunnite ist im schiitischen Persien ein beinahe mehr unangenehmer Name, als Frenği (...). Osmanli sind dort sehr selten gesehen und, so wie alle Sunniten, verhasst und verabscheut." (1867: 123)

⁵ Babinger (1927) had traced down only four *Gesandtschaftsberichte* or reports of diplomatic envoys: Ahmet Durrî Efendi from Van was sent to Persia in 1720 (1927: 326/4), his account has appeared in print; in 1741, Muşafâ Nazîf also visited Iran on a diplomatic mission (1927: 327/6); Muşafâ Rahmî (died 1751) is also reported to have left a *Sefâretnâme-i İrân* (1927: 285, 328/10); another travelogue on Iran by Seyyid Mehmet Refî', who describes his journey in 1807, was printed in 1917 (1927: 332/26).

Many of the historical or geographic sources of the period are direct results of the frequent war-like activities. There are descriptions and itineraries of campaigns which the Ottoman rulers undertook in Iran, such as the *Mecmû'î Menâzil* by Maṭraççı Naşûh (Taeschner 1962), and the *Revâniyye* and the *Tebrîziyye* by Ta'îqîzâde Meḥmed (Babinger 1927: 167-168). Information may also be gleaned from the *Münşe'atii's-Selâṭîn* by Aḥmed Ferîdûn.

Novelesque travelogues like Evliya Çelebi's *Seyâhat-nâme*, on the other hand, are exceptional. The most famous 17th century Ottoman atlas, the *Cihân-nümâ* by Kâtib Çelebi, a compilation of geographic and historical data, also hints at a shortage of appropriate contemporary sources. As far as the description of the 'Irâq-ı 'Acem or Persian Iraq, the province which had been no less than the political and historical center of Iran, is concerned the author obviously had no recent geographic literature at hand. How else could one explain the fact that he drew extensively on the *Nuzhat-al-Qulûb* of Ḥamd-Allâh Mustawfî of Qazwîn written three hundred years before, in 740 (1340)? This book, which seems to have been highly esteemed among Ottoman writers is, in essence, a compilation of older geographic sources.⁶ As a state accountant (*mustawfî*), Ḥamd-Allâh had access to revenue lists and similar documents of the İl-Khanid administration and was thus able to add interesting details to his work that are not found elsewhere.

Yet, with regard to the main routes through Iran, little seems to have changed since Sassanid times. In their attempt to promote both the pilgrimage and trade, the Abbasids had adopted the arterial roads crisscrossing the country: The main trunk led from Baghdad through Hulwan, where it entered the Jibal province. Crossing it diagonally, it went on through Kirmanshah, Hamadan, Mazdaqan, Saveh and Ray and continued into Khurasan. From Hamadan and Saveh, its branches ran south into Isfahan, north from Hamadan through Sultaniyeh (which was founded in İl-Khan times) and Zanjan into Azerbaijan, and from Saveh via Qazvin and Sultaniyeh farther north.

⁶ A comprehensive survey of these traditional Islamic sources on Persian Iraq can be found in Schwarz (1925).

2.2 17th century European sources

There is a considerable amount of contemporary European travel literature on Iran. Under the threat the constant Ottoman expansion to the West, Europeans looked upon Iran as a natural ally. States and statelets kept sending envoys and delegations into Iran, although to little political effect.

Especially the 17th century can be seen as the heyday of European Iran-tourism, when many able writers crossed Persian Iraq headed for Isfahan. On the numerous books and travel reports which resulted from these early touristic activities see Hinz (1940), Gabriel (1952), Lockhart (1986: 373-409) and Ardalan (2003). Many travellers came via Basra and Baghdad. They followed the old trunk roads described above, which formed part of the Silk Road. Others travelled overland. They have taken much the same route as Evliya Çelebi, i.e. from Turkey through the Kurdish mountains into Azarbaijan. At a later stage, some also went by a northern passage via Moscow. Though the first stages of their itineraries may have been different, the final destination of most European travellers was Isfahan, the splendid court of the Safawids.

3. Evliya Çelebi's descriptions of 'Irâq-ı 'Acem

The Ottoman traveller visited the northern regions of the land of the despised Qızılbaş twice: In 1056/1646, he joined Defterdarzade Mehmed Paşa on his way to Erzurum and was appointed as an envoy to Tabriz.⁷ Before he set off on a journey to Georgia, he took the opportunity for a short sightseeing-trip to Maragheh and Aradabil. In 1655, Evliya Çelebi accompanied his mentor Melek Ahmed Paşa to Van. Van was the base for his travels in Western Iran and Iraq, which he describes in a passage of the fourth volume of his *Seyâhat-nâme* (Bağdat Köşkü 305, 285b-331b).

As this was his second journey through Azerbaijan, the texts contains a number of references to sequences and itineraries of the first excursion in this region. Evliya Çelebi excuses himself for not again giving a description of Tabriz, as he had already done so in the second volume of his travelogue (Bottom of 303b, Bağdat Köşkü 305). The explicit hint to the reader to look up

⁷ *Bağdat Köşkü* 304, 276a to 326b (= *İst. Bd. I+II*): Erzurum -> Şuşik -> Karabağ -> Nahcivan -> Tabriz -> Maraghe -> Ardebil -> Khoy -> Revan -> Gence -> Shamakhi -> Derbend -> Tiflis -> Erzurum -> Qars -> Ani -> Etchmiadzin -> Erzurum.

the relevant passages in the second volume of the *Seyâhat-nâme* reveals that the author or composer of the travelogue was aware of the division into volumes or books when he was writing the text down. This cross connection also implies that the basic structures of this extensive work had been taken down in a chronological order. Yet, the gaps which appear frequently throughout the book indicate the intention of the writer to supplement additional information-the sources may be notes taken by the traveller, official documents, registers, or other secondary sources.

Surprisingly, and very unlike the usual tradition of 17th century travelogues, Evliya Çelebi's description of Persian Iraq does not include Isfahan, the capital of Iran and court of its Safawid rulers. There are, though, several references to a planned visit to Isfahan and an audience with Shah Abbas throughout the text and in both the headings of the sub-chapter describing the setting out from Urmieh⁸ and the chapter on the journey through Iran.⁹ The motivation for this journey through the '*Irâq-ı 'Acem*' remains unclear. Initially, it seems to have involved a political mission. Evliya Çelebi is sent to Iran to effect the release of a prominent prisoner: the brother of Murtaza Paşa, the governor of Baghdad (Bağdat Köşkü 305, 284b4-5). As this task is fulfilled during the very first stage of his journey, at Dumbuli (Bağdat Köşkü 305, 298a5), one may suppose that there was no longer practical need for the Ottoman envoy to visit the capital and present the case of the unfortunate prisoner to the highest authorities.

At some later point, the author himself explains that touristic curiosity drove him towards Iran: "As we wished to travel the Persian land in every possible direction from right to left and north to south..."¹⁰ Considering the hostile attitude the Shii population had towards Sunnites in general, and, under the prevailing political circumstances with regard to Ottoman subjects in particular, there may have been more preferable destinations for a sightseeing trip. This involves also the question how the "mission" on which Evliya

⁸ *Şehr-i Rûmiyye'den Tebriz'e ve İsfahân-ı nısf-ı cihânda Şâh 'Abbâs'a gıtdigimizi bildirir.* (Bağdat Köşkü 305, 299b18).

⁹ *Sene 1065 (...) diyâr-ı Âzerbâyçân-ı Tebrîz'den ve diyâr-ı Rûmiyye'den ve hâk-i İsfahân-ı nısf-ı cihândan güzer edüp...* (Bağdat Köşkü 305, 304a1-2).

¹⁰ *Diyâr-ı 'Acem'i îûlen ü 'arzen yemîn ü yesâra gezmeğe 'azîmet etdiğimizde ...* (Bağdat Köşkü 305, 304a).

pretends to have set off to (at least northern) Iran has to be judged: Was he an Ottoman agent whose task consisted of convincing instable tribal leaders to take sides with the Ottoman Sultan? A spy, investigating the geographical setting, the shape of fortifications, logistics? And, not least, did he really and in persona visit all the places he describes? As Iran seems to have been *terra incognita* to many of his compatriots, he could have faked reports of remote places by using literary sources, the traditional Islamic universal histories on the legendary background of older settlements, statistical data from the archives of the Ottoman administration and the like, and no one would have discovered it.

3.1 Itinerary

As the red thread connecting the various sections of a travel report, the itinerary is an item of great importance. It establishes a sound parameter to measure the degree of veracity of travel reports in general. The sporadic comparancy with older sources proves that toponyms have remained relatively stable throughout longer periods of time. On the other hand, it is difficult or, in some instances, even impossible to identify the names of smaller places or villages of 17th century Iran. Yet, if one compiles the information which several sources provide on the major places of settlement, the arrangement of stages of Evliya Çelebi's journey is still hard to understand or follow.

To give an impression of the route Evliya Çelebi took through Iran, the major destinations of the passage (Bağdat Köşkü 305, 304a to 328b) have been numbered (1) to (33). On the map (appendix 1), they are connected by arrows which do not represent the exact course of the overland roads. In the table (appendix 2), the stations of Evliya Çelebi's itinerary have been compared with the corresponding entries in Hamd-Allâh Mustawfî (Le Strange 1919), who represents the traditional Islamic geography. A secondary parameter is Maṭraqçı Naşuḥ's itinerary of the campaign of Suleyman the Great in the year 1534/1535. Evliya Çelebi frequently refers to the Ottoman campaigns in Iran under the sultans Suleyman the Great, Murad III and Murad IV. He may have gleaned information from the related itineraries.¹¹ For some items, supplemental quotes from the historical gazetteer of Iran by Adamec (1976) are

¹¹ A more detailed comparison might thus be revealing. Yet, it would require more than the frame of this paper, being more appropriate for a monography by a specialist in the field.

given. A precise source is the *Seyahâtnâme al- Hudûd* by Mehmed Hurşîd Paşa (Eser 1997) whose main interest is in the border region between the 19th century Ottoman Empire and Iran. Birken (1976), who relies on Evliya Çelebi or Joseph von Hammer is less reliable.¹²

The first stage of Evliya Çelebi's itinerary leads from Tabriz (1) over Sarâb (2) in Azarbaijan to Sultaniyah (3), the former Moghul capital in Persian Iraq.¹³ This route is largely identical with that of Ḥamd-Allâh Mustawfî (1919: 174-175) and of the numerous authors who draw on him as their primary source.¹⁴ The station Mihrân-rûd in Evliya Çelebi, five leagues east of Tabriz, also appears in Taeschner (1962: 79); Serâvrûd (2) is Sarâb, which is also called Serâv, Serâh or Sarâh. Other villages in Evliya Çelebi's itinerary remain obscure.¹⁵ On the whole, the descriptions of Azarbaijan are reliable. Thus, it is highly probable that the Ottoman globetrotter visited these regions.

The following itineraries, on the other hand, are hardly intelligible. According to the arrangement of stages, Evliya Çelebi must have been zigzagging through Persian Iraq, turning to and fro in various directions. Leaving the smaller settlements aside, his destination next to Sultaniyah is the castle of "Qâraqân near Qazvîn", i.e. the mountains of Kharaqan/Kharraqan (4) on the old trade road from Sultaniyah to Hamadan with the major settlement called Âvaj, Âvah or Âba.¹⁶ From Kharaqan he turns north to Maragheh (5), then obviously east to Khalkhal (6, Herowâbâd) and back to Sarâb (7), which he has called *kend-i Serâvrûd* before. From Serâh/Sarâb, which is halfway on the old road from Tabriz to Ardabil, he journeys east to Ardabil (8), and then back southwest to Mount Sahand (9).

¹² Birken (1976) identifies Derteng with Hulwan ("Derteng, das alte Hulwân...", p. 220) and Şahrizor with Kirkuk (p. 223).

¹³ For travelogues on the region see Minorsky (1970: 33-35).

¹⁴ From Tabriz four leagues to Sa'dâbâd or Sa'îdâbâd, six leagues to Miyânji, 18 leagues to Sarcham and seven leagues to Sultaniyah, etc.

¹⁵ Dost is the village Dusht in Ḥamd-Allâh Mustawfî (1919: 82). It appears under its correct name in the itinerary of Evliya Çelebi's first journey through Azarbaijan (Bağdat Köşkü 304, 304b).

¹⁶ There are two places with the name Âvaj, Âvah or Âba. The first one lies in the mountains of Kharaqan, in the direction of Qazvin, the second is situated southeast of Saveh.

One of the longest distances in his itinerary is the following stage from Sahand all the way down to Nahawand (10), crossing Persian Iraq in full length from North to South. The next station is Kinkevr (11), or Kangâvar/Kanguvar northwest of Nahawand (*Nihâvend hâkinde*), which is also called Kinkivar or Kingivar.¹⁷ As it is typical of Evliya Çelebi, the name *Kinkevr* is a play on words, probably derived from the form Kingivar. It combines the Iranian *kîn* 'revenge' and the Kurdish *kevr*, *kevîr* 'stone' or the like, interestingly combined in a rhyme with *ehl-i cevr* 'the outlaws/terrorist people', which may be a paraphrase for *luşûş* 'robbers'). From Kanguvar, the route leads southwest to Bisutun (12), back east to Hamadan (13), northeast again to Âvîh/Âvah (14), southwest to Kermanshah (15), and once again northeast to Dargazin (16), and then southwest to Denâver (17), Qasri Shirin (18) and nearby Hulwan (19).

From Hulwan, Evliya sets out on another long distance journey. This time, he crosses Persian Iraq from its extreme West up to the Northeast, to Qazvin (20). Going farther in a northeastern direction, he visits Mut (21, Alamut), Daylam (22) and a mysterious *Qal'e-ye Luşûş-ı Şâh Pervîz* (23), which he describes as "a principality on the territory of Qazvin". Of old, *Qal'e-ye Luşûş* or 'Robbers' Castle' was understood as a topographic nickname for Kanguvar, see Mustawfî (Le Strange 1919: 107): "Kanguvar, known as *Qaşr al-Luşûş*, built by Khusraw Parvîz." This identification would also make sense with regard to the following destination, namely nearby Asadabad (24) between Kermanshah and Hamadan. From Asadabad, Evliya Çelebi makes a short excursion to the northwest, to Mihribân (25), or Marîwân, in Kordestan. Turning southeast again, he visits Sîne (26).

From Sîne, he crosses most of Persian Iraq in an eastern direction, all the way to Qom (27). Then he turns southeast to Kashan (28), and, probably on the same highway in the reverse direction, up to Saveh (29). From Saveh, he goes northeast to Rey (30) and Damavand (31). A fourth long distance journey along the east-west axis takes him back to Kermanshah (32) and then to Derteng (33), where he is back on save Ottoman territory.

On the whole, this arrangement of stages is hardly intelligible. Moreover, some destinations appear twice, which is the case with Sarâb (2, 7),

¹⁷ See Savory (1986: 126).

Kermanshah (15, 32), Kanguvar (11, 23) and probably also the Kharaqan-region (4, 14). Yet, there is a lengthy comment by the author on his second visit to Kermanshah (Bağdat Köşkü 305, 328a). Evliya Çelebi explains that he had to return to this place, which had been the starting-point for his trip to Nahawand (sic!), Qom and Kashan, because it is situated on the highway to Baghdad. The unfortunate Kanguvar receives no similar explanation. Yet, the author must have been even aware of the fact that the toponym *Kinkevr* and the nickname *Qaşr al-Luşûş* denote an identical location (see above, the explanation of *ehl-i cevr*).

It is, on the whole, extremely difficult to infer how the arrangement of the itinerary of Evliya Çelebi's journey through Persian Iraq could be explained. Obviously, the author took down notes and sequences of text of his travelogue as the journey proceeded. Thus, he must have planned a visit to Isfahan, as this name appears among the destinations in the chapter heading (see above, fn. 8 and 9). But the following text does not contain the announced description of the city. As indicated above, Evliya Çelebi may have changed or may also have been forced to change his route. In another instance, he mentions the circumstances responsible for such a change of destination. Thus, while being in Qasri Shirin (Bağdat Köşkü 305, 134a), he learns that Murtaza Paşa has gone to Düceylan and accordingly directs himself to the east again.

Despite the disorderly itinerary, it is clear that Evliya Çelebi had some precise idea of the geography of Persian Iraq, be it solely on the basis of the traditional geographic literature. In the section on Qazvin, for instance, he quotes some of the potential sources.¹⁸ In the same sequence, he also comments on the usual stages of the *şâhrâh*, the highway to Isfahan, over Saveh, Qom and Kashan.

The sequence on Arabian Iraq, which immediately follows the passage on Persian Iraq, is arranged in a similarly confusing fashion. Again, the itinerary, of which Kornrumpf (1981/82) presents a map and a thorough analysis, oscillates from east to west and from north to south. Evliya Çelebi explains at least partly for the chaotic arrangement of stages: "Under the pretext of describing the livas of Derne and Derteng, all the *sancaqs* of the province of

¹⁸ See Bağdat Köşkü 305, 315a, where he quotes several historical sources: Ta'rîh-i Hallikân, Avân-ı Unvân, Takvîm-i Bûlâda etc.

Baghdad have been described and we are back (at our starting-point) Haruniyeh again."¹⁹ Yet, as Kornrumpf (1981/82: 260-261) concludes, it does not seem realistic that Evliya Çelebi had actually travelled this route in the fashion he described it. I would draw much the same conclusion for most of the relevant sections on Persian Iraq.

Another argument against the itinerary presented both for Iran and Iraq is the time factor, although one has to keep in mind that the dates Evliya Çelebi gives are generally not very reliable. He set out on his journey through Persian Iraq in Zilhicce 1065/October 1655. As he was able to see *Ashura* at Dergezin,²⁰ he must have arrived there before the 10th Muharrem 1065/9th November 1655.²¹ A third date in the relevant passage refers to his arrival at Baghdad on the 12th Rebi'ülevvel 1066/9 January 1656. Thus, the time-table comprises roughly three months for the journey through Iran and Iraq. Taking the contemporary means of travel and the usual distances per day into account, plus some additional time for rest and sightseeing, this does not seem feasible.²²

A third argument against the authenticity of at least parts of Evliya Çelebi's description of Persian Iraq concerns the style and the contents of this sequence. What is so characteristic for this author is his vivid style and his pointed portraits of important people and places. In ever so many other passages he uses direct speech and dialectal features as a means for additional authenticity. But only few of these characteristic features appear in his description of *'Iraq-ı 'Acem*. Thus, Evliya mentions to have stayed for some time with the local governors or khans of Tabriz (Bağdat Köşkü 305, 304a), Qazvin (315a), Nahawand (307a) and Dergezin (312b),²³ and to have

19 See Bağdat Köşkü 305, the last line at the bottom of 330a: "... Derne ve Derteng livâları taħrîri bahânesiyle eyâlet-i Bağdâd'in cümle sancaqları taħrîr olunup yine menzili Hârûniyye'ye gelindi."

20 On his first journey to Iran in 1646, he observed the Ashura-play in Tabriz.

21 The date given in the manuscript is 12 Muharrem, cf. Dankoff and Kreiser (1992: 49).

22 I leave the exact calculation to the reader. According to Ritter (1840), who summarizes information from an enormous bulk of older and contemporary travelogues, a traveller on a horseback made on the average between three to eight *farsakh* 'Parasange' a day, the degree of mobility depending also on the difficulty of the terrain and weather conditions.

23 The khan of Dergezin addresses him in his local dialect: "Ey Evliya Akam, kalk gör ne temâşâ êdesin."

conversed with the notables of Hamadan (311a), and some acquaintances in Qazvin (315a). Furthermore, he refers to a visit at a beautiful public bath at Hamadan (311a). An interesting detail appears in the description of Sarâb (305b): Evliya Çelebi observes that the people in the cafes of Sarâb still recite mockery verses in the *Bayâti makâmı* on the defeat of Cığalzâde Paşa during Murad III's 995 campaign.²⁴

The highlight of the passage on Persian Iraq is the description of Derguzin, which also contains Evliya Çelebi's famous confession that he never drank wine or coffee and never smoked tobacco. On the 12th Muḥarrem 1066 (9th of Nov. 1655),²⁵ he observes the 'âşûrâ-celebration in the steppe of Dergezin (312b-313a). The vivid description and the pointed characterisation of the *şeyḥ* who recites the *Makteli'l-Hüseyn* by Fuzûlî shows Evliya at his best.

The remaining parts of the excursion on Persian Iraq are rather academic. They do not represent any personal or new observations. The question whether the Bisutun is the work of Ferhâd or no human construction at all, for instance, is answered in favour of the latter. The same conclusion appears throughout the literature and is also to be found in *Cihân-nümâ* (1732: 303). Even the stories of talismans in Nahawand and Kashan go back to older prototypes, such as Mustawfî, who mentions snakes imprisoned by a talisman near Hamadân in his section on the marvels of Persian Iraq (Le Strange 1919: 273-274). The scorpions of Kashan also have been described by Mustawfî and those traditional geographers (cf. Ritter 1940) on which he has based his work.

Moreover, Evliya Çelebi does not refer to characteristic landmarks, places of interest or local customs which attracted the attention of contemporary travellers in Iran. The information he offers seems to rely to mainly on literary sources of three kinds. For the legendary beginnings of history and the time of the prophets and mythological kings and founders of the cities it may have been Islamic traditions such as aṭ-Ṭabarî's *Ta'rîḫ ar-Rusul va'l-Mulûk* and other universal histories and geographical works. For the conquests of Hülegü and Timur, the *Tâ'rîḫ-i Reşid ad-Dîn* and similar histories. Detailed reports on the

24 ...bizler Serâv şehri içre seyr ü temâşâ tarîkiyle kahveḫâneler önünden güzer etdiğimizce Bayâtî makâmında uşûl ile Qızılbaş-ı bed-ma'âşlar Cığaloğlu'nun münḫezim olduğunu ma'niyyât-ı bî-ma'nileri yüzünden... (305b)

25 Cf. Dankoff & Kreiser (199149).

geographic background of the campaigns of the Ottoman sultans, especially Suleyman the Great, Murad III and Murad IV and their ministers Ciğalzade and Hüsrev Paşa may have been obtained from the itineraries of the campaigns.

Throughout the *Seyâhat-nâme*, the strategy for the ordering of the material consists in preparing a standardized catalogue of headlines, which introduces criteria and statistical data for the description of major places of interest. It contributes to the sketchy character of the travelogue that in many parts of the sequence on Persian Iraq, items of these itineraries are left open, as, for instance, in the description of Mihribân (318a), Qom (321a), Kashan (322a), and Rey (325b). Such shortcomings indicate that the manuscript of the travelogue is a draft, which should have been revised and completed at some later point. Possibly, the itineraries also had to be worked on again, the order of destinations rearranged. Given the bulk of geographic secondary literature containing precise itineraries, this would have been an easy task.

4. Résumé: The *Seyâhat-nâme* as a source of history

If one dismisses the itinerary on Persian Iraq due to its obvious inconsistencies, the next logical step will be to question the reliability of the work or at least the relevant passages as a historical source. In this context, I refer to two, less spectacular items which prove that details have been rendered precisely. The first is the rendering of the Hamadan dialect (310b). The short sample Evliya Çelebi presents gives an reasonable picture of this Turkic variety, in exactly the way one would expect for this region in the given period.²⁶ The second example concerns the didactical verses which are applied to teach the Arabic alphabet to children (323b). Many elderly people in Iran who went to the traditional school or *maktabe* about fifty years ago still know these rhymes by heart, even though they have never been able to discover any sense behind them. The pronunciation of these verses corresponds exactly to the transcription which Evliya Çelebi presents.²⁷ Such details prove that the *Seyâhat-nâme*, inspite of the obvious shortcomings of some of its itineraries, is a treasure of unusual information-no matter how this information has been obtained. One

²⁶ See Bulut (2002).

²⁷ I will publish some of these recent versions produced by Iran-Turkic informants in a collection of Bayat texts from Iran.

may well imagine that Evliya Çelebi elicited some of his material of informants from places he had never visited.

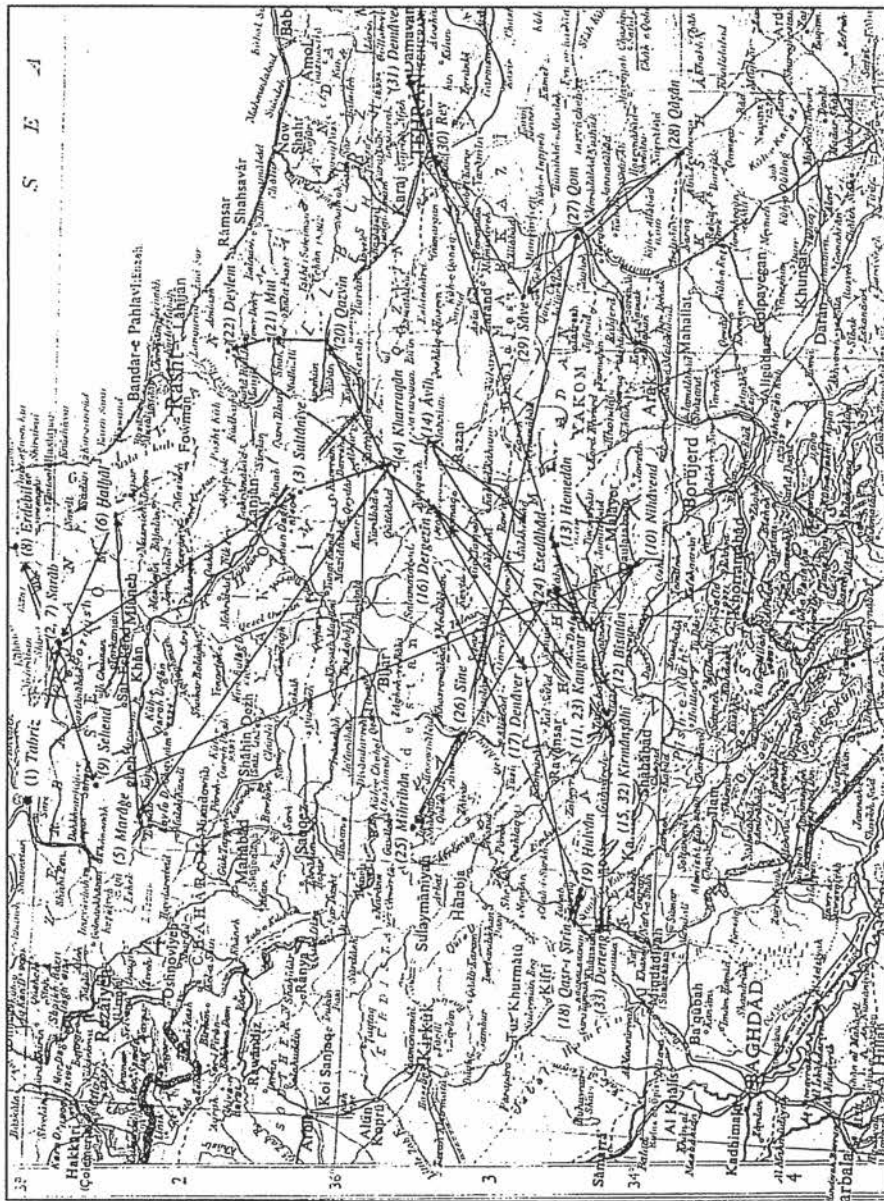
In the tradition of Islamic geographers, Evliya Çelebi wants to present a comprehensive survey of encyclopaedic knowledge, myths, and historical facts. The vast compendium of items from different sources has to fit the frame of a biographic travel report. This may explain the ambition of the author to present every item as a personal observation. No matter whether the information is based on Evliya Çelebi's personal observations, or was obtained in interviews with informants, many details still display a surprising degree of authenticity.

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Appendix (1): Map



Appendix (2): Itinerary

Note: The numbers in brackets refer to the points of destination on the sketch.

			Ḥamd-Allâh Mustawfî	Maṭraqçı Naşuh	Adamec
(1)		Tabriz			
	east, four menzil	Menzil-i nâhiye <i>Mihrân-rûd</i> ²⁸ five fersah east of Tabriz	Mihrân-rûd (81-82)	Mijrân-rûd (p. 79)	
	east	Nâhiye kend-i <i>Rût</i>	Kand-Rûd, in the Mihrân-Rûd district of Tabriz (82)		
		<i>Kend-i Esfah</i>	İsfanj, in the Mihrân- Rûd district of Tabriz (82)		
		Menzil-i kend-i <i>Sa'îd- âbâd</i>	Sa'dâbâd/ Sa'îd-âbâd, in the Mihrân-Rûd district of Tabriz, four leagues from Tabriz (82)	Sa'dâbâd (79, 86)	
(2)		kend-i <i>Serâvrûd</i>	river Sarâv-Rûd, in the Sard-Rûd district of Tabriz (81-82), Sarâv (83)		
		kend-i <i>Dost</i>	Dûsht, in the district Sard-Rûd of Tabriz (82)		
		Menzil-i kend-i <i>Çevlânduruk</i>			
	south	<i>Kend-i Alak-bulak</i>	'Alak and Falak of Qazvîn (64, with a reference to Ibn Khallikân, II, 680)		

²⁸ See Minorsky (1979: 82): Mihrân-rûd (şimdi Maydân-çay) In this article, Minorsky (1979: 83) also mentions the districts of the province of Tabriz: Tebriz, Merend, Ḥalḥâl, Erdebil, Miyâna, Sarâb, Muşkin-şahr, Arsbârân, Merâga, Haşta-rûd.

		Menzil-i kend-i <i>Sercem</i> in the nâhiye of Marâghe	Sarcham, 12 leagues from Sulţâniyyah in direction to Tabrîz (174)	Sarçam, six <i>farsah</i> from Miyâne (80, 88)	
(3)	south	Qal'e-yi Sulţânîye (?); Nehrevân Hânlığı hudûdunda	Sulţâniyyah (61-62) ? Nahrawân near Takrît, Arabian Iraq (42, 52-53), river arises in Kuridstan (212)	Sulţânîye (80)	
	south	kend-i <i>Semâdühün</i> : şehir-i Qazvîn ve şehir-i Qaraqan (= ? mountains of Kharâqan) derbendine gâyet qarîb	Siyâhdahân ²⁹ (64)		Siyâh Dahân a village 18,5 miles southwest of Kazvin (609)
	five hours to the south	kend-i <i>Kecâbâd</i> a village near Qazvîn and Kharâqan	Kajâbâd, in the district Sard-Rûd of Tabrîz (82)		
		nâhiye-yi <i>Rûdeqân</i>	Rûdkân (?176)		
(4)	south	Qal'e-yi Qaraqan Kehrevân nâhiyesinde sulţânîq	Kharraqân, Khirqân (76, pass.)		
(5)	south	Marâge eyâlet-i Şehrezûl'a ve Qal'e-yi Kerkük'e cânib-i qibleye iki merhalede varılır	Marâghah (88, pass.)	Marâge (86)	
		kend-i <i>Turnaçayırı</i> Gökdoğaq Ermeni köyi	?		
	south	kend-i <i>Setgiz</i> kend-i <i>Manmâh</i>			?Maimeh/ Meyme in Saveh (427)
	south	Qal'e-yi Kehrevan ³⁰	?		? Kaleybâr in East-Azerbaijan

29 On the toponyms in the province of Qazvîn, Le Strange remarks: "Most of these names are very uncertain, and they vary considerably in the MSS."

30 According to Mehmed Hurşîd Paşa (1997: 99), *Kavriûvân* is another name for the *Kal'a-i Şâhin* in the nâhiye *Kazâ-i Dertenk* in the *Livâ-i Zuhâb*; this would be a great distance off the route Evliya Çelebi claims to have taken.

	south	kend-i <i>Şâhbender</i>	?		
		nâhiye Bayat Erdebil hâkinde	? Bayat in the Arabian Iraq and Bay'at Qûbâ > Baquûbâ (49)		
	south	şehr-i 'azîm ... <i>Harzebil</i> ³¹ Erdebil hâkinde daruğalıq, kûh-ı Ardalân dâmenlerine qarîb			? Heris, a village in the district of Sarâb (227)
(6)	qible üç menzilde	qasaba-yı <i>Musula</i> , <i>Tıram Halhâl</i> nehr-i Qandûzen'den 'ubûr êdûp	? Khalkhâl (84)		Khalkhâl, formerli called Haruûbâd (329)
(7) /(2)	south	Serâh (= Sarâb)	Sarâv, Sarâh, Sarât or Sarâb, s.a. (87-88)		
(8)	qible/ south	Erdebil	Ardabîl (83-84, 173)		
(9)	qible	Sehend	Sahand (187)		
(10)		Nihâvend	Nihâvand (76, 166, 273)		
	south	kend-i <i>Seyyidler</i> Nihâvend hâkinde	?		
		kend-i Hazret-i Sa'd-ı <i>Vakkâs</i> Nihâvend hâkinde	? ³²		

31 I am not able to identify the location of *Harzebil* (305a), a revenue area in Ardabil, near to the mountains of Ardalân in Kordestan. Besides its Shiite population, this rather large city still hosts 70,000 to 80,000 Armenian inhabitants. It was destroyed subsequently in the raids of Hulâgû, Timur, Qanûnî Sultân Süleyman and Murad IV. With due caution, one may suppose that *Harzebil* is another play on words. The root associates the name of Ardabil, with the h-prothesis which is typical for Iran-Turkic, while {z} could be derived of the original grapheme {z}. Thus, the name evokes all kinds of associations, such as Turkish *herze* 'idle talk' and worse, or the Persian 'false pearl' + *bîl* 'Hacke'; or the Persian *har* 'donkey' + Turkic (< Arabic) *zebil*, *zibl* 'dung'. Evliya Çelebi refers to Ibn Hâllikân. This may be a second-hand source, as this author is also quoted by Mustawfî and Kâtip Çelebi.

32 There are references to the Arab general and conqueror of the Arabian Iraq Sa'd ibn Abî Waqqâs on p. 37 and 163, but none applies to a village bearing his name.

(11)	seven hours	Qal'e-yi Kinkevr Nihâvend hâkinde, yine dest-i 'Acem'de	Kanguvar, known as Qaşr al-Luşûş, built by Khusraw Parvîz (107); six leagues from Asadâbâd (161, 166)		Kangavar (301)
		Qal'e-yi Sorh-bîd (Bîsûtûn dâmenlerinde, cf. 328a)			?
(12)	north, south, qible, west, than qible	Qal'e-yi kûh-ı Bîsûtûn	Bîsûtûn (183) ³³	Bîsûtûn (82)	
(13)	qible	Qal'e-yi Hemedân	Hamadân (74/75)		
(14)	qible, seven sâ'at	Menzil-i kend-i 'azîm <i>Âvîh</i> Dergezîn hâkinda	Âvah (66), four leagues from Savâh (175), Kûh Namak Lân between Âvah and Qum (190), river Gâvmâsâb (213-214)		
(15)	qible, iki gün	Qal'e-yi Kirmânşâhî Luristân hudûdunda	Kirmânshâh (106-107, 162)		
	east, nine hours	Dergezîn boğazı			
(16)		Qal'e-yi Dergezîn ³⁴	Darguzîn, in the A'lam district of Hamadân (75, 76)	Dargazîn (81, 88)	
	east	Qal'e-yi Pilaver Dergezîn hâkinde Bağdâd'in şimalinde Qal'e-yi Cem-cemâl râhi üzre vâqi' olmuşdur	?		Pilavar in NW- Azarbaijan, confounded with Pileh in Marivan? (501)
(17)	east	Qal'e-yi Denâver	Dînavar (106)		Dinavar, between Sonqor and Kirmanshah (157)

³³ Mustawfî quotes a quatrain of the poem Khusraw and Shîrîn by Nizâmî; he also mentions the sculptures on the 'Gallery' of mount Bisutun.

³⁴ *Dergezîn* also in Mehmed Hurşîd Paşa (1997: 238, 283, 286).

	qıble	Qal'e-yi Cem-cenâb hânlıq	? = Sulţânâbâd Jamjimâl/ Jamjamâl (106), six leagues from Kirmânshâhân (161)		
	east	Qal'e-yi Destpol ³⁵ Cem-cenâb Hânlığı	?		
(18)	east	Qaşr-ı Şîrîn two affluents of the Diyaliye river	Qaşr-ı Şîrîn (50); Nahrawân and Şîrvân-river (212)	Qaşr-ı Şîrîn (83)	
(19)	east	Hulvân hâk-i Bağdâd'ın hüdûdunda hâs	Hulvân in the Arabian Iraq (47), five leagues to Qaşr-ı Şîrîn (162), 212		
(20)	east	Qazvîn Murad IV, 1048; dest-i Acem'de qalup	Qazvîn (62-64, pass.)		
(21)	north, six fersah	Qal'e-yi Mut Qazvîn hükümünde kelenterlik	Alamût, in the district Rûdbâr (66)		
(22)	east	Qal'e-yi Deylem hâk-i Qazvîn'de sulţânlıq	district of Daylamân (65)		
(23)/ (11)		Qal'e-yi Qaşrû'l- Luşûş-ı Şâh Pervîz hâk-i Qazvîn'de sulţânlıq	Kanguvar, known as Qaşr al-Luşûş, built by Khusraw Parvîz (107)		
(24)	qıble	Qal'e-yi Esedâbâd sulţânlıq	Asadâbâd (75), itineraries (161)	Asadâbâd (82)	
		Qal'e-yi Bâğ-ı Cinân dest-i Acem'de başka hânlıqdır	?		
	qıble	kend-i Yasavul	?		
	qıble	kend-i <i>Badanlica</i> Çiğ Ahmed Qal'esi şâhrasında; muqadedema Şehrezûl hükümünde, hâlâ Mihribân Qal'esi hükümünde.	? Sharazûr (106)		? Shahr-i- zur, ³⁶ (588)

35 *Deştipo* near Suleymaniya in Mehmed Hurşid Paşa (1997: 190).

36 Circa 1900 on the disputed border between Persia and Turkey Adamec (1976: 588). For the exact location of Şahrizor see Fuat (1970: XIII, fn. 6).

(25)	qible	Qal'e-yi Mihribân ³⁷ dest-i Acem'de qaldı	?		Marivan, district east of the Iraqi border (439- 440)
(26)	east	Qal'e-yi Sine dest-i Acem'de deştile qalmışdır	?		Sineh, Sinneh, Sanandaj, four stages north of Kermanshah (614-615)
(27)		Qal'e-yi Cebel-i Qom	Qum (71, pass.)		
(28)		medîne-i Qâşân	Kâşân, scorpions of (71-72)		
	east	"several flourishing villages"			
	east	menzil-i kend-i <i>Zülyezen</i>	?		??
	east	medîne-i Cerbân Qaan hük-m-i Şâh-ı 'Acem'de Qâşân eyâletinde başqa sultânlıqdır	?		??
(29)	east	medîne-i Sâve hâk-i 'Irâq'da ve hük- m-i Kâşân'da sultânlıq	Sâvah (67-68)		
	south	kend-i <i>Hayder Hân</i>	?		??
	south	kend-i <i>Sultân Dürûğ</i> ³⁸	?		??
(30)	south	Rey	Ray (58-60)		
		yaylağ-ı kûh-ı Demâvend	Damâvand, mountain (184), copper mines (197)		
	north	kûh-ı Aqra ³⁹ Kürdistan Aqra beğiyle 'Acem müşasında	=? 'Aqr (104)		
(31)		Qal'e-yi kûh-ı Demâvend , dest-i 'Acem'de, Rey şehri hükümünde	Damâvand, town (158)		

³⁷ According to Birken (1976: 211), *Mihrawân* could be identified with *Marîwân*. Mehmed Hurşîd Paşa (1997: 171-172) explicitly writes in his chapter on the description of the *Livâ-i Süleymâniye der Eyâlet-i Şehrîzûr*: "... ve Merîvân nâm-ı diger Mihribân."

³⁸ Possibly a nickname of one of the frequent locations by the name of Sultân-âbâd in Tehran and Qazvîn.

³⁹ For Aqra see Fuat (1970: XIX).

	five hours to:	menzil-i Şâh köprüsü	?		
(32)/ (15)		menzil-i Qal'e-yi Kirmânşâhî	Kirmânshâh (106-107, 162)		
	south, three hours	menzil-i kend-i <i>Qaçar Hân</i>	?		Qâjâr (509) ⁴⁰
	south, seven hours	kend-i <i>Sührâb</i> ⁴¹ Kirmânşâhî hâkinde	?		
	south, five hours	menzil-i kend-i <i>Serhale</i>	?		
	south, eight hours	menzil-i kasaba-yı <i>Tâk-ı Giray</i> ⁴² Derteng Qal'esi hudûdunda	Ṭâq-ı Girrâ, pass between Kirmânshâhân and Hûlwân (162)		
	south, two hours	Derteng boğazı ⁴³ 'qapu-teng'; andan içeri cânib-i qibleye Âl-i 'Osmân'ın Bağdâd hudûdudur.			
(33)	five hours	Qal'e-yi Derteng	?		

40 According to the location near Qorve, on the road Qazvîn - Tabrîz given by Adamec (1976: 509), this seems to be a different village.

41 Maybe *Suhravard*, between Hamadân and Zanjân, cf. Minorsky (1937: 383). Mehmed Hurşîd Paşa names a *Sûrâv Karyesi* in the sancaq of Süleymâniye (1997: 189).

42 *Tâk-ı Kerrâ* near the *Serpül Gediği* in the sancaq of Zuhâb, cf. Mehmed Hurşîd Paşa (1997: 105).

43 *Dertenk gediği*, cf. Mehmed Hurşîd Paşa (1997: 100).